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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1566  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MANAGUA 002384

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, WHA/FO  
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USAID/W AND USAID/OFDA  
SOUTHCOM PLEASE PASS TO JTF BRAVO  
NSC FOR ALVARADO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MASS](#) [AEMR](#) [EAID](#) [KPAO](#) [NU](#)  
SUBJECT: RAINS STOP; FLOOD RECOVERY CONTINUES

REF: A. MANAGUA 2372  
[1](#)B. MANAGUA 2366

[1](#)1. Subject: The persistent heavy rains that flooded Nicaragua the past weeks have let up, and relief is starting to flow to victims of the October flooding. President Ortega called together a meeting of donors on October 23 to urge for international assistance in response to the second natural disaster to hit Nicaragua in 52 days; however, the GON's National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response (SINAPRED) is still in the process of putting together a comprehensive assessment report on needs priorities from the October flooding. On October 25, USAID signed an agreement with the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) for emergency relief in three departments affected by the October floods. The GON released on October 23 its updated, but still preliminary, report on flood damages that shows an increased number of victims than earlier reported. There are no known U.S. citizen casualties from the flooding. End Summary.

Ortega Makes His Pitch

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[1](#)2. On October 23, President Ortega met with representatives of the donor community. He started off by noting the forest fires in Southern California, saying that many countries were suffering from natural disasters because of global climate change. Ortega noted that after Felix, the October flooding was the second national disaster in 52 days. He then launched into a diatribe against Nicaragua's "untouchable debt service" that is impeding Nicaragua's ability to respond to the needs of its own people, and he called for a restructuring of the terms and conditions for Nicaragua's internal debt. It's like having a "gun to our head," Ortega complained.

[1](#)3. At the October 23 meeting, the GON also asked for the following sums to meet the ongoing needs generated by Hurricane Felix and the October flooding (amounts given in U.S. Dollars):

2.7 million for food purchases;  
8 million for housing;  
52 million for vital infrastructure;  
2 million for risk management;  
9 million for health;

15 million for agricultural rehabilitation;  
5 million for fisheries rehabilitation; and  
6 million for forestry.

The GON did not produce a comprehensive list of needs directly resulting from the October flooding; however, the preliminary needs that the GON set forth for two departments include: 1,500 mattresses; food for one month for 3600 people; 1,500 gallons of fuel for cleaning efforts; and antifungal medications.

Better but still sketchy numbers

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14. Also on October 23, the Nicaraguan Civil Defense authorities released updated, but still preliminary, numbers for flood-related damages that show increased numbers of victims. The October 23 report enumerates: 31,237 people (6,659 families) affected; 6,376 persons evacuated; 10 deaths; and two missing persons. The report lists significant infrastructure damage: 1,972 dwellings, of which 33 have been completely destroyed; 1,707 destroyed latrines; 413 contaminated wells; 22 partially damaged bridges, 1,314 kilometers of damaged roads, 59 broken sewers, and multiple damaged retaining walls and other infrastructure weaknesses. Health authorities have also registered 161 cases of leptospirosis in one community in Chinandega, with two corresponding deaths.

USG Response

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15. On October 25, USAID signed an agreement with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) for USD 50,000 in USAID/OFDA funds to assist in the relief effort of the October flood victims. Under the terms of the agreement, ADRA will concentrate its efforts on providing needed relief supplies to 1000 families in the most affected areas to alleviate suffering. This relief effort will benefit 48 percent of the total of families affected in three departments of Matagalpa (600 families), Madriz (240 families), and Chinandega (600 families). Included in these relief supplies are food rations, mattresses, kitchenware, and cooking kits. In addition to USAID's assistance to families under the ongoing Food Security Program, 10% of food commodities currently in the country from USAID P.L. 480 partners (ADRA and Project Concern International) -- valued at USD 26,210 -- will be distributed to flood victims in the departments of Jinotega, Chinandega, Madriz, and Matagalpa. These are additional beneficiaries that are not covered by the Food Security Program. USAID/OFDA has deployed two disaster experts to Nicaragua to assist with the ongoing assessments and coordination.

16. Regarding Hurricane Felix response, USAID received on October 25 an additional USD 300 thousand from USAID/OFDA for the expansion of economic rehabilitation activities in the Atlantic Autonomous Region North (RAAN) of Nicaragua and is working with ADRA on program proposals for these funds. USAID Deputy Director will fly to the RAAN on October 26 to participate in Donor Group meetings with the Mayor of Bilwi and the Governor of the RAAN. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Valdrack Janetschke will accompany the Donor Group on the visit. Also, on October 30, there will be a signing ceremony for an additional USD 3 million for World Food Program (WFP) food, at which both Ambassador Trivelli and Foreign Minister Santos will speak.

Other Donor Contributions

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17. While there is no coordinated mechanism to assess donor contributions, the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) published on October 24 a list of international civil society organization contributions that includes:

UNICEF - USD 2,000 for medical assistance; 500 blankets

CARE - 1,096 basic food packages

German Agro Action (GAA) - 3.5 days of food for 900 persons;  
4 100 yard rolls of plastic sheeting

Plan International - 1,065 mattresses

World Vision -

\*Chinandega - food for 7 days, medicine, blankets and  
plastic sheeting for 265 families in shelters

\*San Francisco Libre (department of Managua) - water,  
food and medicine to 54 families in shelters

American Citizen Services

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¶8. The Consular warden in Matagalpa reported that she was  
aware of one U.S. citizen whose domicile was flooded with  
over a meter of mud; however, the AmCit has not made contact  
with Embassy nor made any request for assistance. There have  
been no further flood-related calls to the Embassy, and we  
have no direct knowledge of any U.S. victims.

Public Affairs

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¶9. The October 21 Embassy press release generated very  
positive articles about USG assistance in the press on  
October 22. It is worthwhile noting that October 24  
CID/Gallup survey shows a high percentage of Nicaraguans who  
are aware of the USG's disaster relief assistance in response  
to Hurricane Felix, despite GON efforts to highlight instead  
the assistance promised by ideologically favored partners  
such as Venezuela and Cuba. 47 percent of survey respondents  
indicated that they believed the US had helped more than any  
other country, vs., 29 percent for Venezuela, and 4 percent  
for Cuba.

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